

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Statue of Liberty National Monument
Ellis Island Immigration Museum

In an Immigrant's Footsteps Planning and Activity Guide For Self-Guided Field Trips To Ellis Island



National Park Service Mission (1916)

To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations

Introduction

Whether American immigration is part of your curriculum or you just want to expand your students' horizons, a visit to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum can be very rewarding.

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty make up the Statue of Liberty National Monument, one of nearly 400 units in the National Park Service (NPS). Once the site of the world's most renowned immigration station, today Ellis Island is home to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Ellis Island's significance is perhaps best summed up in the phrase "Gateway to America," as more than 12 million immigrants passed through its doors between 1892 and 1954. This flow of people is thought to represent the largest voluntary movement of people in history.

Immigrants whose lives were changed in countless ways also changed the face of their newly adopted country. America emerged from this period not only one of the wealthiest countries in the world but also a leader in industry, agricultural production, exports, and urban growth and development.

In order to help you and your class better appreciate this exciting chapter of American history this guide contains all the information necessary to guide your class through the Museum. Also included are several activities to enhance your students' understanding of historical immigration. Each activity is designed to meet the relevant core content curriculum standards of New York and New Jersey and follows many of the guidelines presented in the Universal Design for Learning.

We hope you enjoy your visit!

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Begin your visit with this self-guided tour of the Ellis Island museum, after which pick and choose from the list of options below.



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Suggested Pre- and Post-visit Activities

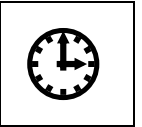
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Planning Your Visit



Before coming to Ellis Island...

- Visit the NPS website at <http://www.nps.gov/elis> for all sorts of helpful information, including a short history of Ellis Island and photos.
- Make a schedule. Use the template below to maximize your time.
- Prioritize your activities. We suggest you start off with the 45-minute self-guided walking tour that follows: *"In An Immigrant's Footsteps"*. Afterwards, you can view the museum exhibits and have your class try out one of the activities listed on pages 24-30.

Making a schedule

Please reflect on how much time you have to spend on Ellis and Liberty Islands and how much time you will spend in transit. To estimate each leg of the trip, consider the following:

Action	Description
Travel time from school to the boat	Ellis Island can only be reached by ferries provided by Statue Cruises . Board the ferries in either Battery Park, New York City, or Liberty State Park, Jersey City, N.J. Consult with teachers, school administrators, and bus company representatives to estimate bus trip times. <i>As there is no bus parking at Battery Park we suggest public transportation for those coming from New York City.</i>
Booking tickets	There is no charge for visiting either Ellis or Liberty Islands, but Statue Cruises charges a fee for a round trip ferry ticket which includes visits to both islands. To avoid ticket lines buy reserve tickets (at school discount prices) online at http://www.statuecruises.com or call 1-877 LadyTix (1-877-523-9849).
Boat lines	Note that boat schedules represent departure times. To avoid long lines try to arrive early.
Security clearance	Prior to boarding, all visitors go through a security check for weapons and contraband similar to airport security.
Boat ride	<p>The duration of the boat ride to Ellis Island depends on the point of departure. As New York boats stop at Liberty Island first and then proceed to Ellis Island, the ride takes about 35 minutes. The return trip to New York, however, is direct and takes about 15 minutes.</p> <p>New Jersey boats stop at Ellis Island first for a ride that takes about 15 minutes. The return trip to New Jersey first stops at Liberty Island and takes about 35 minutes.</p> <p>Note that the times quoted are approximate and based on normal wind and weather conditions. Boat schedules are posted at http://www.statuecruises.com.</p>

Use the following charts to help plan your visit to Ellis Island. If a visit to Liberty Island is part of your plans, modify the schedule accordingly.

Sample Schedule for New York Boats

Activity	Duration	Real time
Bus ride from school to boat	55 minutes	9:30 am to 10:25 am
Screening	50 minutes	10:25 am to 11:15 am
Boat ride to Ellis Island	35 minutes	11:15 am to 11:50 am
Ellis Island museum visit	1 ½ hours	11:50 am to 1:20 pm
Bag lunch	30 minutes	1:20 pm to 1:50 pm
Boat ride to NY	15 minutes	1:50 pm to 2:05 pm
Bus ride back to school	55 minutes	2:05 pm to 3:00 pm

Sample Schedule for New Jersey Boats

Activity	Duration	Real time
Bus ride from school to boat	55 minutes	9:30 am to 10:25 am
Screening	50 minutes	10:25 am to 11:15 am
Boat ride to Ellis Island	15 minutes	11:15 am to 11:30 am
Ellis Island museum visit	1 ½ hours	11:30 am to 1:00 pm
Bag lunch	30 minutes	1:00 pm to 1:30 pm
Boat ride to NJ	35 minutes	1:30 pm to 2:05 pm
Bus ride back to school	55 minutes	2:05 pm to 3:00 pm

Teachers Schedule

Activity	Duration	Real time
Bus ride from school to boat		
Screening in NY or NJ		
Boat ride to Ellis Island		
Ellis Island museum visit		
Bag lunch		
Boat ride to NY or NJ		
Bus ride back to school		

Please note that, weather permitting, Ellis Island is open every day, except Christmas (December 25). If you have questions call the National Park Service at (212) 363-3206, extension 134.

When you arrive...

Orient yourself. After disembarking from the boat, be aware that if you face the main entrance to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum you are facing north. Behind you is the South Side or Islands 2 and 3, housing Ellis Island hospital. Manhattan and Brooklyn are to your right (east) and the Ferry Building at the end of the dock is to your left (west).



You probably want to stop by the **information desk** located on the main floor of the museum. This is where we recommend students meet if they get separated from the group.

- Walk up the ramp and through the main entrance of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.
- You are now in the Baggage Room. Note that the room is rectangular and that there are stairwells marked **EXIT** in each corner.
- In addition to exits, each stairwell leads to the upper floors. Note that stairwells to the right are marked **East** and those to the left are marked **West**.
- If you face the baggage exhibit, the information desk is to your left (west) and the cafeteria is accessible by either corridor to the right (east)
- Go to the information desk to:
 - Pick up the Ellis Island brochure map;
 - Pick up tickets for the documentary film *Island of Hope Island of Tears*;
 - Check the boat schedule;
 - Find out about special events and temporary exhibits;
 - Find out about other NPS sites in the area.

Ellis Island Rules and Regulations

In order to preserve and protect Ellis Island and ensure visitor safety...

There must be one teacher or adult chaperone for every ten students.

Chaperones must remain with students at all times while on ferries and during the visit.

Failure to remain together may result in groups being escorted off the island.

Students should conduct themselves in a courteous manner and refrain from loud or rowdy behavior, including running and shouting, and any actions that may harm museum resources or interfere with other visitors' enjoyment.

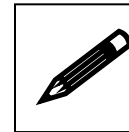
Food and drink, except water, may not be consumed in the Ellis Island Immigration Museum except in the cafeteria and outdoors.

Smoking is not permitted in the museum.

Please dispose of gum and other garbage in trash receptacles.

In case of an emergency contact a National Park Service employee or a U.S. Park Police officer.

Museum Activities



Teachers are encouraged to begin their visit with the...

Activity	Description	Duration	Page
Self-guided tour of Ellis Island: The Essential Ellis Island	This tour is designed to cover essential information about immigration through Ellis Island by tracing an immigrant's footsteps.	45 minutes	9

...after which they may pick and choose from the following options:

Museum exhibits	Three floors of exhibits on American immigration during the Ellis Island years and how the island developed from a colonial fort to the present world-class museum. <i>The heart of the museum is the second floor. Exhibits include the Registry Room, Through America's Gate, and Peak Immigration Years which, taken together, present a picture of immigration 100 years ago.</i>	1 ½ hours	18
Ellis Island Early History Walking Tour	This self-guided tour covers the early history of Ellis Island, including a visit to the Fort Gibson archeological site and to the Ellis Island Chronicles exhibit on the third floor.	45 minutes	19
Documentary <i>Island of Hope, Island of Tears</i>	A 45-minute presentation that includes a 15-minute National Park Ranger introduction and a 30-minute documentary about Ellis Island immigration.	45 minutes	23
On-site activities	Curriculum-based activities designed to teach students about Ellis Island immigration by engaging them in museum resources.	Varies by activity	24

Self-guided Tour of Ellis Island: The Essential Ellis Island

Time frame: 45 minutes

Materials: Ellis Island brochure map

As you assemble on the dock, if you face the Ellis Island Immigration Museum you are facing north. The buildings behind you on the “South Side” are the Ellis Island Hospitals on Islands 2 and 3. Walk to the right (east) along the seawall to the southeast corner of the island.



Stop 1. Southeast corner of Ellis Island

You have just landed on Ellis Island like the immigrants did 100 years ago. If you look south you can see New York Harbor and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

The area, including coastal New York and New Jersey, was once inhabited by Native Americans, later known as the Lenni Lenape. Their ancestors are thought to have come to the Americas between 10,000 and 20,000 years ago across the Bering Land Bridge and then made their way to what is now the northeastern United States.

The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is named after Giovanni da Verrazzano, who sailed into New York Harbor in 1524, making him the first European explorer to visit this part of the world.

Ever since, New York Harbor has been the gateway to New York. Henry Hudson sailed here in 1609, followed by Dutch settlers in the 1620s who bought large tracts of land, including Manhattan Island in 1626, from the Native Americans. On the southern tip of Manhattan, just across the water from here, the Dutch built the town of New Amsterdam. In 1630, the Dutch bought New Jersey, which they called Pavonia, and several islands in New York Harbor called the Oyster Islands, including today's Liberty and Ellis Islands.

In 1664, the English took control of the colony and renamed it New York. During British rule, the future Ellis Island changed hands (and names) several times. During the 1670s, the island was called **Dyre's Island** (ca. 1670s-80s) after owners William and Mary Dyre. By 1730, it was known as **Bucking Island**, a name of unknown origin that was used for much of the 18th century. By 1765 the island was also known as **Anderson's Island** and **Gibbet Island** after a pirate named Anderson was hanged here.

Samuel Ellis, the last undisputed owner, is thought to have owned the Island during the American Revolution, based on a newspaper item from 1778 about a boat found adrift at “**Mr. Ellis's Island.**” Then in 1785, Mr. Ellis advertised the

sale of the island which included a tavern, several barrels of herring, fishing nets, and miscellaneous equipment.

In 1808, just before the War of 1812, the US government bought Ellis Island in order to build a fort as part of a harbor defense system. The remains of Fort Gibson are located near the Wall of Honor (see brochure map.) *Also see Ellis Island Early History tour for more details.*

During the colonial period and the early years of the republic immigration was very slow. *Ask older students why they think immigration was slow during the colonial period. Answers include:*

- *The transatlantic journey by sail took about two months, during which time food and water often ran short.*
- *During the early days of settlement there was armed conflict with Native American groups who resisted European colonialism.*
- *Settlers needed great physical strength and stamina to clear land for agriculture and build towns and villages.*
- *Agricultural production was insecure.*

The first major wave of immigration to America took place during the late 1840s when large numbers of Irish emigrated to escape the potato famine (1845 to 1852). The United States had open borders then, meaning that there weren't any laws restricting immigration.

When immigrants landed many were set upon by criminals intending to take advantage of the strangers who carried with them all their worldly possessions. Newspapers reported baggage stolen, children kidnapped, and immigrants cheated when they exchanged money or bought train tickets.

To remedy the problem New York State opened up the first immigration processing station in the United States in Castle Garden on the site of Castle Clinton in Battery Park.

If you came through Manhattan, mention to your class that earlier in the day they saw Castle Clinton, the site of Castle Garden.

By the late 19th century, however, with many more immigrants coming to the United States from southern and Eastern Europe, Castle Garden was too small.

In 1890, the federal government took control of immigration processing. Ellis Island was chosen as the site of the new immigration station. It was thought to be large enough to handle the increased number of immigrants entering the port of New York and, as an island, it was safe from the criminal activity targeting newcomers in Manhattan.

It took two years to double the size of the island with landfill and build the Immigration Station, which included a main building, support structures, and a new dock.

Ellis Island opened on January 1, 1892. The first person processed was a 17-year-old girl from County Cork, Ireland, named Annie Moore, who was accompanied by her two younger brothers. Over the next 32 years, from 1892 to 1924, more than 12 million people came through Ellis Island.

As the population of the United States around the turn of the 20th century was less than 100 million people the 12 million people who came through Ellis Island represented more than 10% of the American population.

Many of the newly arrived immigrants went into the labor force as retailers, factory workers, dock workers, and construction workers. America was transformed from a rural-agricultural to an urban-industrial society within a few decades. This great stream of humanity which transformed the United States and the world is why Ellis Island is so important: why Ellis Island is a National Monument and why we are here today.

Walk west along the path until you are in front of the main building

Stop 2. The front of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

By the time Ellis Island opened in 1892 steamships had been bringing immigrants to New York City for 25 years.

What was the main difference between coming to America by steamship and sailing ship?

- *The transatlantic voyage by steamship took about two weeks while the voyage by sail took about two months.*
- *Most steamships had three types of accommodations: first, second, and third class. Third class or steerage passengers occupied the lower decks where the conditions were often crowded and unsanitary.*
- *Even though conditions were crowded and unsanitary in steerage, the situation in steerage was still an improvement over sailing ships.*

As the ships entered New York Harbor they were boarded by medical inspectors who examined everybody, including passengers and crew, for contagious diseases. Anybody very sick with diseases like measles, scarlet fever, and diphtheria was quarantined in hospitals on Hoffman and Swinburne Islands near Staten Island.

Most of the ships, with few exceptions, docked in Manhattan. As the few first and second class passengers had paid from \$100 to \$200 for a ticket (about \$2,000

to \$3,000, today), the government assumed they had enough money to seek medical attention, if needed, and afford food and lodging for two months while looking for a job. Therefore, after passing through Customs, first and second class passengers were permitted to enter the United States, unless they were sick or had legal problems. Third class or steerage passengers were taken to Ellis Island by ferry or barge for another medical test and a legal exam.

Why did the U. S. government scrutinize third or steerage class immigrants more closely than first or second class passengers? Major concerns were:

- *Whether immigrants traveling in steerage carried contagious diseases and thereby posed a health risk to the public*
- *Whether immigrants traveling in steerage were physically capable of earning a living*
- *Whether immigrants traveling in steerage had adequate money to support themselves for two months while seeking employment so that they did not end up on charity or turn to crime.*

In 1897, the original Ellis Island immigration station burned down. The building you are looking at now opened in 1900.

Ask students to give their impressions of the building as seen through the eyes of an immigrant coming from a rural area, who has never been inside a large government structure like this one.

- *Possible impressions might include big, fancy, expensive, imposing, scary, like a castle, like a train station...*

Let us now enter what was a hundred years ago the main immigration station in America and is now the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Walk up the ramp into the main building:

Stop 3: The Baggage Room

Walk up to the exhibit of vintage trunks directly in front of you.

Note that the pieces of luggage on display were acquired by the museum to create this exhibit. None of the pieces were left behind by immigrants.

You are now standing in the original Baggage Room where immigrants checked their luggage before going upstairs to be processed.

Point out the last photo poster on the right. This is a photograph of a baggage room in another building on Ellis Island, but this baggage room would have looked very similar
Referring to the photo...

You can see that many steerage passengers traveled with bundles. Tying up all your smaller bags into a large bundle was a good way to keep track of your belongings on the ship and in the Ellis Island Baggage Room.

What do you think was in the bundles?

- *People brought what was essential and what they could carry, such as clothing, sheets, plates and bowls, utensils, tools, books, photographs, etc.*

Most people left their baggage here and got a receipt.

How would you feel about leaving all your possessions in the hands of a stranger?

After leaving their baggage here, people formed lines and walked upstairs, while being watched by doctors, looking for physical disabilities, breathing problems, and other signs of disease which might hinder the ability to work or pose a health risk to the public. Doctors referred to this brief inspection as the “**six second medical exam.**”

Walk up the stairway to the right of the baggage display.

Ellis Island Symbols for Medical Disorders

B	for back
C	for conjunctivitis (pink eye)
Ct	for trachoma
E	for eyes
F	for face
Ft	for feet
G	for goiter (swollen neck)
H	for heart
K	for hernia (torn muscle)
L	for lameness
N	for neck
P	for physical & Lungs
Pg	for pregnancy
Sc	for scalp / favus
S	for senility
X	for suspected mental illness
(X)	for insanity

Stop 4: The Registry Room (also known as the Great Hall)

After ascending the stairs walk about 20 feet to the left toward the windows.

At the top of the stairs the medical exam continued with particular attention paid to skin and eye disorders. Of particular importance was an eye disease called **trachoma**, the detection of which required the lifting of the eye lid often by button hook or finger.

Anybody who looked sick or disabled was marked with a chalk symbol (see text box) and sent for a more thorough exam and possibly hospitalization or quarantine. Originally, the medical examination rooms were in the main building but when Ellis Island Hospital opened during the first decade of the 20th century most of the medical personnel moved there.

Take a look at Ellis Island hospital through the window. The hospital complex is located on the South Side of Islands 2 and 3, which were built entirely of landfill. At the moment they are being renovated and are not open to the public.

On any given day between 10% and 20% of a shipload of immigrants might be detained for either medical or legal reasons. Medical detainees were sent to Ellis Island hospital.

The average stay at Ellis Island hospital was about two weeks, the time needed for most diseases to run their course. If a medical detainee was given a clean bill of health his or her case was reviewed by inspectors and he or she was most likely released for processing. About 1%, or 120,000 people, however, were sent back home for either incurable contagious diseases or disabilities.

Do you think examining immigrants to see whether they are healthy is necessary? Why not allow immigrants to enter the country without a medical test? What are the risks?

- *Screening immigrants for incurable contagious diseases was a way of preventing epidemics in the U.S. population.*

If you passed the medical screening the next step was to be interviewed by a legal inspector. Although the room has gone through several changes, at one time it was filled with benches like those on the other side of the room (to the west). People sat down and waited for their names (or landing card numbers) to be called. When the name (or number) was called he or she approached a legal inspector's desk.

For most people (about 80%), the wait was three to five hours, not because the initial medical or legal exams were lengthy (in most cases they took a few minutes), but because there were probably a thousand or more people ahead of you.

Now, let's take a look at a ship's manifest.

Walk west to the inspector's desks. Find a desk with a ship's manifest.

Stop 4: A legal inspector's desk

Here is where the legal inspectors reviewed the information on the ship's manifest or passenger list in the presence of an immigrant.

Hold up a ship's manifest for the group to see.

This is an example of a ship's manifest. Emigrants supplied the information to a steamship company clerk at the port of departure. At Ellis Island the inspectors used the manifest to ask immigrants a series of questions about who they were, their past, and their preparedness to start a new life in America. This "primary document" (a document created during the time period) now serves as a record of arrival.

Up until World War I the U.S. did not require immigrants to have passports and visas but they had to be listed on a ship's manifest. Otherwise, they were considered stowaways and generally denied entry into the country.

If you visit the ellisland.org website you can view the ships' manifests of the 12 million people who arrived at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924 and the 4 million who came first and second class through the port of New York during the same time period.

By 1900, there were about 30 questions on the form. The information included an immigrant's name, age, marital status, occupation, nationality, race, country of residence, whether he or she could read, and who paid for the ticket. (The alien contract labor law made it illegal for companies to pay for immigrants' passage.)

There are entries for contact information in the old country, destination in the United States, whether the immigrant had a ticket to his or her final destination, whether he or she was joining a friend or family member and, if so, the name and address.

By the early 20th century ships' manifests asked whether immigrants were in possession of \$50.00, money which was considered essential for housing and food during the first two months in America. People without the required amount of money could contact friends or family members by letter or telegram to lend it to them. Or perhaps one of the immigrant aid societies might lend need immigrants enough money to live on for two months.

Also on the ship's manifest were questions about whether an immigrant was a communist, an anarchist, a polygamist, a felon, or had been treated for mental illness.

Information describing physical characteristics, such as height, hair color, skin color, and eye color, identifying marks, and place of birth, is found toward the end of the document.

Why do you think information describing physical characteristics was placed toward the end of the ship's manifest and not at the beginning as in many forms today?

- *Identity theft was not as common a problem then as it is today.* Immigrants without enough money to live on for a few months and others who were deemed "likely to become public charges," such as unescorted women with children, were detained for a hearing before the Special Board of Inquiry. (*You can visit a restored Board of Inquiry down the hall - see brochure map*). Between 1892 and 1924 another 1% or about 120,000 people were denied entry into the country based on the fear they would end up on as "public charges" or as we would say today 'on charity'.

Otherwise, if an immigrant passed the “cross-examination” by a legal inspector he or she was permitted to leave Ellis Island and pursue a new life in America.

After the legal inspection immigrants descended the stairway called “the Stairs of Separation.” (*Point out the stairway behind you*). People staying in New York took the left staircase, those heading for elsewhere, the right one, and detainees walked down the middle.

Oftentimes, immigrants with friends and family in America reunited on Ellis Island at the bottom of the “the Stairs of Separation,” in a place that has come to be known as “the Kissing Post” (see the brass sign by the elevator).

About one third of immigrants who came to Ellis Island stayed in New York and two thirds left for other parts of the country. Those without contacts often sought lodging in boarding houses in immigrant neighborhoods and began their search for employment.

Now we shall descend the “Stairs of Separation” and visit our last stop: the Railroad Ticket Office.

To get to the Railroad Ticket Office descend the “Stairs of Separation.” When you reach the first floor, walk a few steps forward and then turn left through the doorway on the left. Turn left again and walk straight to the Baggage Room. Once inside the baggage room, turn left and walk past the information desk until you reach Journeys: the Peopling of America 1550 – 1892.

Stop 5: Journeys: the Peopling of America 1550 – 1892

Immigration before the federal government opened Ellis Island. Graphic panels and first person stories invoke different aspects of the journey; Leaving, Making the Trip, Arrival, Struggle and Survival, and Building a Nation.

You have now finished the self-guided tour. Where do you want to go next? From the Railroad Ticket Office you can easily access the other sections of the museum. If you want to eat lunch, walk east to the Ellis Café where you will find limited seating indoors but plenty of seats outdoors.

If you want to view the exhibits on the second or third floors use any of the stairwells marked exit in each corner of the baggage room or the main stairway in the east section of the room. (See Museum Exhibits on pg. 17.)

If you need the ferry, simply exit the main entrance and walk to the left for New York and to the right for the Statue of Liberty / New Jersey.

Museum Exhibits

Time frame: 1 to 1½ hours (recommended)

Materials: Ellis Island brochure map

Location	Exhibits
First floor	<p>The Baggage Room was the first room entered by immigrants 100 years ago. The baggage display (consisting of donations and purchases) and historic photos convey a sense of how the room looked when it was used.</p>
	<p>Journeys: the Peopling of America 1550 - 1892 is about immigration before the federal government opened Ellis Island. Graphic panels and first person stories invoke different aspects of the journey; Leaving, Making the Trip, Arrival, Struggle and Survival, and Building a Nation.</p>
Second floor	<p>The Great Hall or Registry Room was the main room for processing immigrants. It was here where immigrants received a brief medical inspection and then a legal examination.</p> <p><i>Note: this is the room most often seen in movies and historical photographs.</i></p>
	<p>Peak Immigration Years employs artifacts, posters, and photos to document life in the old country, the journey to America, life in the new world, and how the United States was transformed by the immigrant experience.</p>
	<p>Through America's Gate depicts an immigrant's steps from landing in America through processing at Ellis Island. Topics covered include the obligatory medical and legal examinations, as well as hospitalization and detention, when required.</p>
	<p>The Hearing Room, restored to its appearance in 1920, is where Board of Special Inquiry legal inspectors heard the cases of immigrants with legal problems.</p>
Third floor	<p>Ellis Island Chronicles presents an overview of the Island's history and prehistory. Exhibits include scale models of Ellis Island from the early 1800s through the immigration years.</p>
	<p>Treasures from Home contains a wide selection of personal items belonging to Ellis Island immigrants donated by their descendents.</p>
	<p>Silent Voices displays photos showing the decay of Ellis Island after it closed in 1954 and actual objects recovered during the 1980s renovations.</p>
	<p>The Dormitory room, restored to its appearance in 1908, shows where immigrants with legal problems and families of detained children, were housed from 1900 to 1954.</p>



Ellis Island Early History Walking Tour

Time frame: 45 minutes

Materials: Ellis Island brochure map

Exit the main building through the cafeteria and walk to the left until you reach the Wall of Honor and the exposed stones of the Fort Gibson archeological site (see map). Have the class look at New York Harbor to the southeast. Point out the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and tell the class that...

The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is named after the Italian explorer **Giovanni da Verrazano**, the first European explorer to visit New York Harbor. The year was **1524** and according to Verrazano's journal some of his men went ashore to meet the Native Americans whom later sources refer to as the Lenni Lenape (pronounced LEH-nee Leh-NAH-pee).



The ancestors of the Native Americans are thought to have crossed the Bering land bridge, from what is now Siberia to Alaska, in a series of migrations. Although dating the earliest migrants is controversial, with some estimates as early as 40,000 years ago, most archaeologists agree that significant numbers of migrants entered North America between 16,000 and 13,000 years ago. The first evidence of Native Americans in the northeast is dated about 15,000 years ago.

By the early 1620s, Dutch colonists, sponsored by the Dutch West India Company, settled the southern tip of Manhattan Island and called it New Amsterdam. (*You can point to its location to the east, across the Hudson River*).

In 1626, the Dutch bought Manhattan Island for 60 guilders (or \$24) worth of trade goods. (It may be noted that recent historical scholarship suggests that Native American concepts of land sale were perhaps more akin to our notion of land leasing.) Four years later, in 1630, the Dutch bought New Jersey and the Oyster Islands, today's Liberty Island and Ellis Island. Back then, Little Oyster Island (the future Ellis Island) was about 3 acres and was located approximately where the main immigration building stands today.

In 1664, the English took possession of the colony and renamed it New York. For the duration of English rule the future Ellis Island will change hands (and names) several times. Although the name Little Oyster Island or just Oyster Island will be used frequently, the island was also called **Dyre's Island** (ca. 1670s-80s) after owners William and Mary Dyre who eventually conveyed the land to Thomas Lloyd in 1686. Lloyd, in turn, conveyed the island to Enoch and Mary Story. By 1730, it was known as **Bucking Island**, a name of unknown origin that was used for much of the 18th century. By 1765 the island was also known as **Anderson's Island** and **Gibbet Island** after a pirate named Anderson was hanged here.

The last undisputed owner was **Samuel Ellis** who seems to have owned the Island during the American Revolution as a 1778 newspaper item reports a boat found adrift at “**Mr. Ellis’s Island.**”

In 1785, Mr. Ellis advertised the sale of the Island “with all its improvements which are considerable,” including a tavern, several barrels of herring, and sundry fishing nets and other equipment.

Following the death of Samuel Ellis in 1794 New York State bought **Ellis’s Island** (as it was known) and then sold it to the U.S. government in 1808 as the site of a fort to be part of a new harbor defense system. The U.S. was preparing for what would be known as the War of 1812. The other forts in the system included:

- Fort Lewis in Brooklyn
- Fort Tompkins in Staten Island
- Fort Wood on Liberty Island (which you can see)
- Castle William on Governor's Island (also visible)
- Castle Clinton in Battery Park (which was seen or perhaps visited by those who came from NY today)
- **Fort Gibson**, a few foundation stones of which may be viewed right here.

The walls were six feet tall and semi-circled the island’s original coastline. About 180 gunners took turns manning 12 canons. Without a shot being fired, the six harbor forts guarding New York harbor are thought to have prevented a British attack on New York during the War of 1812.

Following the War of 1812, the U.S. Army and Navy maintained a presence on Ellis Island for most of the 19th century. The navy kept stores of gunpowder which was a source of alarm for both the public and the press who feared the catastrophic effects of an accidental explosion. The problem was only solved when the powder was removed prior to the opening of the Ellis Island immigration station in 1892.

Now, proceed to the Ellis Island Chronicles exhibit on the third floor for graphic depictions of Ellis Island history and prehistory. Exhibits include scale models of Ellis Island from the early 1800s through the immigration years. Reenter the main building through the cafeteria doors on the left and walk down the hall to the Baggage Room. Enter the southeast stairwell and walk up to the third floor. When you emerge into the third floor hallway walk to your right to the Ellis Island Chronicles exhibit.

Note the chart on the west wall (to your right) depicting the various archeological time zones of Ellis Island. Start at the bottom with the oldest levels containing prehistoric Native American artifacts and work your way up through the various historical periods to the top.

Next, take a look at the scale models of Ellis Island through history. The first showcase contains a scale model of Fort Gibson. Notice how the fort is oriented to the harbor to protect against a frontal assault coming from the Atlantic Ocean.

The second showcase contains a scale model of the first immigration station which opened in 1892. Note how through landfilling the island has doubled in size.

Why did the United States deem it appropriate to get rid of the military presence on Ellis Island?

- *By the time of the Civil War technological advances increasing the range of artillery made Fort Gibson and similarly situated forts obsolete.*
- *The ammunition supply on Ellis Island posed a danger to surrounding communities.*

The third showcase contains a scale model of the second immigration station (the one we are in now) which opened in 1900. In addition, you can also see the initial construction phases of Ellis Island Hospital on Island 2, also known as the South Side. Ellis Island Hospital was built to accommodate the large number of sick immigrants entering the United States. To address this need the government constructed two islands of landfill (Islands 2 and 3) to accommodate the hospital.

The fourth showcase shows the completed Ellis Island hospital (ca. 1910). The fifth showcase shows the same but with the body of water between Islands 2 and 3 filled in with parkland.

When Ellis Island closed in 1954 it fell into ruin. (This period is documented by photos and artifacts in the third floor exhibit "Silent Voices.") Ellis Island was designated a national site in 1965 when it became part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, administered by the National Park Service.

Although it opened briefly for the 1976 bicentennial, renovation efforts began in earnest in 1984 under the direction of Lee Iacocca, who was appointed head of the Statue of Liberty / Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. by President Ronald Reagan. It reopened to the public in 1990.

After New Jersey initiated a legal suit to gain jurisdiction over Ellis Island, in 1998 the Supreme Court decided that the main building on Island 1 was to remain in the State of New York while the rest of Ellis Island, including the landfilled portions of Island 1 as well as the whole of Islands 2 and 3, were to be part of New Jersey.

You may tell students that as a result of the Supreme Court decision it is possible to be in both New York and New Jersey at the same time by simply having one foot inside the building and one foot outside. After viewing the Ellis Island Chronicles exhibit you may begin your next activity.

Documentary film: *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*

Time frame: 45 minutes

This 30-minute award winning film, narrated by Gene Hackman, takes you from the “old country” to Ellis Island by means of archival footage and the testimony of immigrants who were processed here.

Please note that the film is preceded by a 15-minute National Park Service ranger talk making the total theatre time 45 minutes. To make the best use of your time on Ellis Island, viewing the exhibits, etc., we suggest you download the film for free and watch it in the classroom either before or after your visit.

To download the film go to <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava15996vnb1>. Or simply type in the title *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* at your favorite search engine and follow the link.

If you decide to view the film here, be aware that as seating in the theater is limited, teachers should make reservations through Statue Cruises at <http://www.statuecruises.com> or by calling 1-877-523-9849.



On-site Activities

Registry Room Activity Grades K-3

Activity Overview: For many immigrants, the legal inspection in the Registry Room represented the greatest challenge for those processed at Ellis Island. The Inspectors expected these newly-arrived passengers to remember information that they submitted up to four weeks earlier, right before the ship embarked for the United States. After arriving at Ellis Island, immigrants endured a medical inspection, and waited nervously for the legal examination was conducted. In this activity students will play an immigrant about to be questioned at Ellis Island.

This activity is best performed with students answering the questions on the ships manifests before coming to Ellis Island. Then, while on Ellis Island, having students repeat the exercise comes closer to the immigrant experience.

Time Frame: 30-35 minutes

Materials: Pencils, paper, and “manifest chart” found at the Ellis Island website at www.nps.gov/elis/index.htm. Follow the links “For Teachers” and then “Curriculum Materials” and then click on the appropriate grade level. Print copies of the Ship’s Manifest for your class.

Objectives: By the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Describe some of the difficulties immigrants faced when processed at Ellis Island.
- Identify with some of the hopes and fears of immigrants arriving to the United States.
- Discuss some of the requirements the American government had for immigrants to be granted entry.

Procedure:

1. Head to the Great Hall or toward the wooden desks on the second floor. Inform students that they will pretend to be immigrants about to be “checked in” to the United States. [Optional: Pair students into groups of three-to-four and inform them that they will be a family waiting to be questioned.] Explain that during the “checking in” process immigrants had to answer several questions before they were admitted to the country. Today, they will experience what it was like for immigrants.



2. Have students line up before desks staffed by teachers and chaperones acting as inspectors. Using the “manifest chart” ask the student some or all of the questions asked of them before. The questions can be interchangeable to perhaps reflect what is going on in current events or a topic currently discussed in class.
3. Explain that an immigrant would have had to answer the questions before the trip. The group will line up as a family, but will be separated when it is their turn to be interrogated. Also, inform students that whoever provides a different answer to one written on the sheet will be sent to legal detention.
4. After all the students had their turn, the following questions should be asked and discussed: How did it feel to be processed at Ellis Island? How do you think the immigrants felt as they were standing on line? How hard was it to answer questions, even easy questions under pressure? Now imagine that you and the inspector speak different languages! What problems might that cause? (Luckily, interpreters and translators were there, but it still would have been difficult to speak through an interpreter. For those students detained, ask: What do you think it was like for passengers not allowed to immigrate to the United States?

Treasures from Home Activity

4th-7th Grade

Activity Overview: As immigrants began their journey to America, many made difficult decisions about what to bring with them to start their new life in America. Many passengers, in fact, were limited as to what to bring by the size of their luggage, bags, suitcases, trunks, baskets, and bundles. With this activity, students will decide what items will be necessary (and important) to start a new life in the United States.

Time Frame: 30 minutes

Materials: Pencil, Paper

Objectives: At the end of the activity, students will be able to:

- Identify some of the items immigrants brought with them when they traveled to the United States.
- Describe the difficult choices immigrants encountered (at the time of Ellis Island and today) when deciding what items they could bring.
- Evaluate immigrants' choices or the items themselves OR explain why immigrants brought certain items. Compare this to the objects immigrants carry with them today when they settle in a new country.

Procedure:

1. Proceed up to the east section on the third floor, to "Treasures from Home." Inform students that they will play the role of an immigrant who is about to begin their journey to America. Using the gallery as a guide, students will have ten minutes to decide what they *need* to carry with them (that is, items they felt they could not leave behind) to start their life in their new country.
2. Students split into groups of three-to-four and select artifacts that will be necessary in their new homes. Looking at the showcases "Family Life," "Spiritual Life," "Clothing Ornament," amongst others, have students consider the following:
 - What are some of the things that you find are important to bring with you that will not be available in the United States?
 - What would your parents bring with you? How would that differ from some of the items that you bring?
 - Does the size of your luggage influence what you bring? If so, how?
 - Which of these things that you see in the showcases are so important that most people would bring with them on their voyage?

3. After completing the activity, have students gather by the benches of the Registry Room on the second floor. Have students review their responses and share their ideas with the class. Students will then consider some of the items immigrants will find necessary to bring with them today, and then discuss the following:
 - Are there any items that you would take with you today that are not represented in the cases?
 - What are some things immigrants today will find essential to carry with them that they cannot find in the United States?
 - Do you think the items immigrants items carry with them today are similar to the ones brought one-hundred years ago? How are they the same/different?

Peak Immigration Years Activity

8th-12th Grade

Program Overview: The purpose of this program is to use visually engaging primary documents to help students contemplate and discuss contemporary issues related to immigration (particularly, in the *Closing the Doors* exhibit). In addition, this program should encourage critical thinking about published images and words that promote a particular point of view.

Time Frame: 20-25 minutes

Materials: Pen and handout with contemporary political cartoons.

Objectives:

By the end of the activity, students will be able to:

- Explore how cartoonists use political cartoons to influence public opinion.
- Evaluate the cartoonist point of view.
- Consider different perspectives on the same issue through dialogue and discussion.
- Participate in a dialogue about their own ideas regarding these issues.

Procedure:

- 1) Head to the second floor to the *Peak Immigration Years* exhibit. Proceed through to the galleries until you arrive at the gallery, *Closing the Doors* (right behind the black and white sign that signaled Immigration Restriction).
- 2) Introduction:
Inform students that before we had films, people used political cartoons (and still do) to galvanize people around issues. Explain that in this activity, students will be analyzing political cartoons that will compare past and present issues on immigration. They will consider the cartoonist's point of view, how the cartoonist makes his or her point and what perspectives or considerations are not presented in the illustration. They will also think about and share their own ideas regarding issues raised in these cartoons.
- 3) Divide the students into groups of four. Instruct each group to analyze one or two cartoons in the *Closing the Door* exhibit. Ask them to consider the following questions:
 - What was the illustrator trying to say?
 - How did he or she attempt to do this? Are the characters in the cartoon symbols of a broader group or idea?
 - What group or individual perspectives are NOT represented in this illustration?

Once finished, select a contemporary cartoon (from Set A) and reflect on the same questions.

- 4) After completing the activity, head to the benches (if available) in the Great Hall. Ask each group to share their cartoons with the class and to summarize their answers to the questions. Encourage them to report back on any different interpretations they had within their group.
- 5) For either set of cartoons/images, ask the group to discuss one or more of the following questions. When comparing the images, have the students consider the questions below:

Cartoon Set A – Contemporary views of immigration, labor, and healthcare

Cartoon Set B – Past ideas about U.S. immigration

More questions

- Why do you think people created and published these cartoons? What was each author hoping to achieve? Who is the intended audience?
- How does each illustrator want the reader to feel about immigration?
- Whose interests do these viewpoints serve?
- What do you think about the contemporary cartoons? Do you agree or disagree with the cartoonist's point of view?
- How did the American society express their concerns about newly-arrived immigrants?
- To what extent have these issues changed or not changed over time?
- When you compare the cartoons, what is the difference between the statements they are trying to make?

WORKSHEET – PEAK IMMIGRATION YEARS

SET A



http://www.umass.edu/accele/lc/794d/sfl/images/Political%20cartoon_on_immigration%20tsunami%20statue%20of%20liberty.jpg



<http://fairimmigration.files.wordpress.com/2007/05/immigration-cartoon1.jpg>

Assignment:
In the space below, consider the following:
-Why do you think people created and published these cartoons? What was each author hoping to achieve? Who is the intended audience?
-How does each illustrator want the reader to feel about immigration?
-How did the American society express their concerns about newly-arrive immigrants?
-To what extent have these issues changed or not changed over time?

Suggested Pre- and Post-visit Activities

Pre-visit activities

Map Activity

Objective: To familiarize students with the geographical context of Ellis Island.

Materials: Map of New York harbor

Show the class a large map of the New York metropolitan area. Point out the location of New York and New Jersey, your school, the Atlantic Ocean, Upper and Lower New York harbor, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, Manhattan Island, Liberty Island, and Ellis Island. Show the approximate route from the school to the dock in New York or New Jersey from where you will be departing.

Explain how ships coming to New York, including those that brought the immigrants, entered New York Harbor and then docked mainly in Manhattan. Afterward, small boats, such as ferries and barges, carried the immigrants from the docks where they landed to Ellis Island.

If your class is coming from Manhattan, point out Castle Clinton which was where New York's first immigration station, Castle Garden, was located from 1855-1890. If your class is coming from New Jersey, point out the old railroad terminal from where immigrants who left Ellis Island departed for other parts of the country. Tell the class that when they board the Statue Cruises ferry to Ellis Island they will be following the same path as the immigrants on their way to Ellis Island.

Vocabulary

Objective: To familiarize students with key concepts related to immigration and Ellis Island.

Materials: Handout with vocabulary words

Make sure students know the definitions of key terms and phrases like:

Ellis Island – An island in New York harbor near the Statue of Liberty where the main immigration station in the United States was located from 1892 to 1924.

Castle Garden - The main immigration station in the United States from 1855 to 1890, located on the site of Castle Clinton in Battery Park, New York City.

Immigrant – A person who has entered a new country for the purpose of making a new home (as opposed to visiting or finding temporary work).



Emigrant – A person who **leaves** their homeland to find a home in another country.

Alien – A person from another country.

Embark – To go on a journey or trip, originally by ship, but now by any means, including foot or airplane.

Trachoma – A highly contagious eye disease which, during the early 20th century, led to blindness. Trachoma was of major concern during the Ellis Island years because of its widespread occurrence in Southern and Eastern Europe.

Ship's manifest (or passenger list) – A list of passengers on a ship (or airplane), identifying the individual by name, address, physical description, destination, and personal contacts. During the Ellis Island years, ship's manifests contained between 25 and 30 entries for information about individual immigrants.

Early American immigration

Objective: To familiarize students with American immigration before Ellis Island.

Materials: Blackboard, chalk, world map

The history of Ellis Island is one chapter in the long history of American immigration. To better understand the place of Ellis Island in American history, make a **timeline** showing:

- The arrival of the Native Americans' ancestral populations. Although dates are in dispute, with early estimates at 40,000 years ago, there is some agreement that significant settlement occurs between 16,000 and 13,000 years ago.
- Leif Erickson voyage (ca. 1000 AD)
- Christopher Columbus voyage (1492)
- Giovanni da Verrazano voyage (1524)
- The Jamestown, Virginia, colony (1607)
- Henry Hudson voyage (1609)
- The Pilgrims settlement (1620)
- The New Amsterdam settlement (1624)
- The Irish potato famine (1845 - 1852)
- The Castle Garden immigration station (1855-1890)
- The Ellis Island immigration station (1892-1954)
- Processing immigration overseas (1924-present)
- The closing of Ellis Island (1954)

Use a world map to show students how the first immigrants are thought to have crossed the Bering land bridge. Explain that their descendants are called Native Americans. Show how Native Americans eventually spread from Alaska to southern South America. Mention that Native Americans were present when the first European explorers and settlers arrived. Locate where the early explorers landed, the countries they sailed for, and the settlements that followed.

Pre- or Post Visit Activities

Viewing the film: *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*

Objective: To familiarize students with the immigrant experience through archival documents

Materials: Computer terminal

This 30-minute award winning film, narrated by Gene Hackman, takes you from the “old country” to Ellis Island by means of archival footage and the testimony of immigrants who were processed here.

To make the best use of your time on Ellis Island, viewing the exhibits, etc., we suggest you download the film for free and watch it in the classroom either before or after your visit.

To download the film go to <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava15996vnb1>

Or simply type in the title *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* at your favorite search engine and follow the link.

Oral history project



Objective: To familiarize students with the immigrant experience through firsthand knowledge

Materials: Pen and paper

Students interview a friend or family member about immigrating to the United States. Or, if the student is an immigrant then he or she may provide the following information:

What is the name of the person interviewed? Where is the immigrant from? In what country, city province, etc. was he or she born? What is their relation to the interviewer? When did the immigrant come to the United States? How old was the immigrant when he or she came to the United States? Was he or she accompanied by other family members? Was there anybody already living here to meet them?

What is the reason for immigrating to the United States? How did the immigrant come to the United States? What was the method of transportation?

What steps (such as paperwork, visits to the U.S. consulate, medical exams, etc.) did the person have to take before coming to the United States? What type of processing took place when the person landed in the United States?

Where was the first place he or she lived in the United States? What were some of the immediate differences between the United States and the native country? What were some of the difficulties adapting to his or her new home?

Immigrant name search

Objective: To familiarize students with the ship's manifest by genealogical search.

Materials: Ship's manifest, pen, computer terminal

Visit the Ellis Island website at www.nps.gov/elis/index.htm. Follow the links "For Teachers" and then "Curriculum Materials" and then click on the appropriate grade level. Print copies of the Ship's Manifest for your class.

Have students visit the Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. website at www.ellisland.org to look up the names of immigrants.

Have them start by using their family names, including those of their ancestors. Otherwise, they may use close sounding names or alternative spellings. When they locate their name or a close-sounding name, etc., have them transfer the information on the ship's manifest to the blank one you have supplied. Have students report back to the class about the person on the manifest.

Post-visit activities

Photography exhibit

Objective: To review students' visit to Ellis Island and share with the class what they learned.

Materials: Computer terminal, print paper, adhesive tape or thumb tacks

Create a classroom exhibit with digital photos taken by students and faculty during their visit to Ellis Island. Have students write a short caption about the photo, including what is depicted. Have a classroom discussion during which students explain why they chose specific subjects.

Note: As there will probably be extra photographs, students without cameras may be assigned photographs taken by others.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if there is a medical emergency?

Contact a Park Ranger or U.S. Park Police officer immediately. Park Rangers are located at the information desk during museum hours.

What if a student becomes separated from the group?

To avoid this problem parents, teachers, and chaperones should stay with their respective groups of ten students. Teachers should instruct students that if separated from the group they should meet at the information desk. If students have cell phones then teachers should enter the cell numbers into their own cell phones and possess a hard copy. Please be advised though that there are many zones of poor or no cell phone reception throughout the museum.

Do not under any circumstances board boats without complete attendance.

How can I trace an ancestor who came through Ellis Island?

The ships' manifests of all immigrants who came through the port of New York between 1892 and 1924, including those who came through Ellis Island, are listed on a data base maintained by The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., a partner of the National Park Service. The data base may be viewed at www.ellisland.org.

What is the Wall of Honor?

The Wall of Honor lists more than 700,000 names of Ellis Island and other immigrants for whom donations were made. The wall is maintained by the Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., a partner of the National Park Service. Money goes to support the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Are all Ellis Island immigrants listed on the Wall of Honor?

No. Being that more than 12 million people came through Ellis Island, the Wall of Honor lists only a small fraction of Ellis Island immigrants.

Where is the Wall of Honor located?

The Wall of Honor is located in back of the main building. To get there, exit the main building through the cafeteria and walk to your left. If you want to find a name on the wall first check the computers in the Baggage Room and note the panel number.

Is there a place to eat lunch on Ellis Island?

Students may either bring their lunch or buy it in the food concession located in the eastern wing of the museum. Although everyone is welcome to eat in the cafeteria or at the picnic tables outside please bear in mind that seating is limited.

If we are visiting the Statue of Liberty should we go there before or after visiting Ellis Island?

If you are also visiting the Statue of Liberty you may want to go there first as the site gets busier throughout the day. If you prefer to visit Ellis Island first but plan to visit the Statue of Liberty later in the day *and* you have **museum / pedestal access passes** permitting you to enter the Statue of Liberty museum or pedestal, you must, at the latest, be on the **next to last boat** to Liberty Island, **not the last boat**. Boat schedules are posted at www.statuecruises.com and at the information desk on the main floor.

Is Ellis Island accessible to people with disabilities and those who are hearing impaired?

Yes, the Ellis Island Immigration Museum is designed to accommodate the physically handicapped and hearing impaired. We also have a limited number of wheelchairs which may be borrowed on a first come first served basis. Inquire at the information desk. For further information call (212) 363-3200, ext. 134, or contact us through our web page at <http://www.nps.gov/elis>.

**Is there a book that the immigrants signed?**

No. Contrary to what was depicted in the movie *Hitch* there is no book that the immigrants signed. Instead, each immigrant's name along with other pertinent information was recorded on a ship's manifest prior to leaving for America. On Ellis Island the information on the ship's manifest was used as the basis of an examination of immigrants by legal inspectors.

Is there a Lost-and-Found?

The Lost-and-Found is located at the information desk on the first floor of the Ellis Island museum.

Does Ellis Island offer school programs?

The Ellis Island Division of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services offers several school programs during the school year for a small number of students on a limited basis. Check the NPS website (www.nps.gov/elis) for details. Reservations are made through Statue Cruises at www.statuecruises.com or call 1-877-523-9849.

How can I find out more about Ellis Island and the National Park Service?

Visit our web site at <http://www.nps.gov>

Call the Statue of Liberty NM, Division of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services, at (212) 363-3200, ext. 134 or 180.

Email us at STLI_Education_Department@nps.gov.

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